

2021 State of the City Report

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE



MOVEBR

Mayor Broome's \$1 billion infrastructure enhancement program, MOVEBR, is the largest infrastructure program in the history of East Baton Rouge Parish. Our goal is to have about 30% of MOVEBR projects completed by 2025. This would be a \$300 million capital expenditure on infrastructure improvements - not only improving our infrastructure but creating a huge stimulus in our local economy. MOVEBR is also leading the way for inclusion of minority-, women- and veteran-owned small businesses.

The MOVEBR program has 21 projects set to begin construction in 2021 including:

- Mall of Louisiana Boulevard (Picardy-Perkins Connector)
- Pecue Lane (Perkins Road – Airline Highway)
- Ben Hur realignment at Nicholson Drive
- Dijon Avenue Phase 2 (Midway – Bluebonnet Boulevard)
- Midway (Dijon Avenue Phase 2 – Picardy)

- Old Hammond Highway Segment 2 (Millerville Road – O’Neal Lane)
- South Choctaw Drive (Flannery Road – Central Thruway)

Keep up with all the enhancements at movebr.brla.gov

TRAFFIC LIGHT SYNCHRONIZATION

As part of the MOVEBR Program, all 470 traffic signals in East Baton Rouge Parish are scheduled to be upgraded and synchronized by 2023. Signal synchronization is an important part of the MOVEBR program because it will provide 100% connectivity via fiber, allowing traffic flow to be adjusted at any time from the Advanced Traffic Management Center on Harding Boulevard.



DRAINAGE

We are scheduled to complete \$655 million in major drainage projects by 2025:

- Stormwater Master Plan: The East Baton Rouge Stormwater Master Plan and 20-Year Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan seek to identify flood-related risks, vulnerabilities and recommend prioritized capital improvements to mitigate or reverse those risks. The goal is to develop a comprehensive flood risk mitigation plan that will be cost-effective, promote resiliency and keep up-to-date with best engineering and technological practices. Learn more at: www.stormwater.brla.gov

- The Comite River Diversion Canal: The project will reduce flood potential for most residents living along the Comite and Amite Rivers. Upon completion, some residences will see potential flood reduction of up to 2 feet.
- East Baton Rouge Flood Risk Reduction Project: Also known as the Five Tributaries Project, the plan will reduce flooding potential along 5 sub-basins throughout the parish, including Jones Creek, Ward Creek, Bayou Fountain, Blackwater Bayou, and Beaver Bayou. This project consists of improvements to 66 miles of channels, including clearing and snagging, widening, concrete lining and improvements to existing culverts and bridges to reduce headwater flooding/backwater overflow in the Amite River Basin.

ACCELERATING OUR ECONOMY

As we rebuild our local economy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, we will prioritize attracting Fortune 1000 companies in a variety of sectors that are competitive strengths to our city-parish along with growing our small business sector to East Baton Rouge Parish while promoting economic efficiency, competitiveness and equity.

The home of two large universities and a ready workforce, we will continue to market our community as a place of thriving industry with a growing number of high paying jobs. Among our priorities is to identify a major grocery store partner to locate in North Baton Rouge.

In 2021 and beyond, Baton Rouge will continue to bring employers to the Capital Region while supporting all of our small and locally owned businesses by driving investment, efficiency, and economic opportunities for our residents.



DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

We continue to push the bounds of the city-parish government to create equitable systems and a level playing field for our small and locally owned businesses. We will soon implement our Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Certification Program, the first time minority-, women- and veteran-owned small businesses can receive a key designation in procurement and contracting with the city-parish government. The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Certification Program is a partnership with the Baton Rouge Airport and BREC and an outgrowth of the 2019 Disparity Study.



HOWELL PLACE

Mayor Broome worked with investors to reopen the New Era Medical Office Complex on Howell Boulevard. When it opens in 2021, the facility will house OCEANS Behavioral Health Center, Ochsner Health clinic, Capital Area Human Services, and the Louisiana Center for Eyes, creating over 100 new jobs and increasing commerce in North Baton Rouge.

BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS

Throughout this year, we saw how critical internet access is to economic opportunity with schools, jobs and healthcare shifting online.

Currently 82% of East Baton Rouge Parish residents have access to high speed internet. Our goal is to surpass 90% by 2025. We aim to do this by working with telecommunication companies to expand our infrastructure.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE



OPERATION CLEAN UP

Operation Clean Up is part of the Mayor-President's comprehensive strategy to combat blight in East Baton Rouge Parish. Operation Clean Up provides an opportunity for City-Parish and community groups to partner and support neighborhood beautification and enhancements during four quarterly service projects.

The program has partnered with The Walls Project and Keep Baton Rouge Beautiful to fight blight and dumping in high problem areas and sponsored neighborhood cleanups.

In addition to Operation Clean Up, the Department of Public Works is:

- Prioritizing street sweeping in high litter areas.
- Dedicating city-parish work crew for junk/trash/debris collections
- Revising the Stormwater Management Plan to increase focus on litter & debris reduction

Mayor's Homelessness Prevention Coalition

The Mayor's Homelessness Prevention Coalition has partnered with community stakeholders to establish Behavioral Health Crisis Outreach Teams to address trauma, encampments, littering, loitering, and panhandling in East Baton Rouge Parish. Recent

actions have led to providing supportive assistance and temporary housing for youth, veterans, those suffering from behavioral health challenges, women, and families seeking housing.

The Office of Community Development and Build Baton Rouge have allocated over \$6 million of HUD grant funds to community partners who have provided case management, shelter operations and other activities to assist both homeless individuals and those facing homelessness.

PRIORITIZING PUBLIC SAFETY

Addressing public safety involves a two prong approach: the role of law enforcement and addressing the social determinants of health that adversely impact public safety. Mayor Broome is working to create a cohesive collaboration between a “boots on the ground” approach in law enforcement and the revitalization of our disinvested communities.



A SAFE, HOPEFUL, HEALTHY COMMUNITY

In September, Mayor Broome announced the Safe, Hopeful, Healthy Initiative, which will utilize \$2 million in CARES Act Funding to address public safety in Baton Rouge. The initiative is aimed to combat the increase in crime following the global coronavirus pandemic.

Safe, Hopeful, Healthy will work to interrupt the cycle of violence, strengthen family support, revitalize neighborhoods, promote academic education, and prioritize access to care.

This will be done by implementing mentorship programs, connecting residents to social services, improving the opportunities available within the community through youth development programs, and connecting our residents to neighborhood-based public benefits and supportive services.



BRIDGE CENTER FOR HOPE

Mayor Broome is proud to support the opening of the Bridge Center For Hope, a new mental health and substance abuse center which provides citizens and our first responders with a place to bring those experiencing crisis.

The Bridge Center For Hope employs the no “wrong door” approach, which means that anyone experiencing a crisis is welcomed, whether they walk in on their own, are escorted by loved ones, referred by a provider agency or transferred by first responders, or law enforcement.

POLICE OFFICER PAY RAISE

Mayor Broome has secured a 3% pay raise for every officer with the Baton Rouge Police Department. The increase is a first step towards making the Baton Rouge Police

Department competitive with surrounding agencies, which will help us attract and retain qualified officers.

The raises are being implemented purely through efficiencies, without additional cost to taxpayers. Officers who meet performance standards will also receive an additional 3% merit raise.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

In order to maintain adequate staffing levels due to growing health emergencies, Mayor Broome allocated funds for 32 additional medics in the 2021 budget. Additional staffing will provide funding to place three emergency transport vehicles into service.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF HEALTH



COVID-19

In early March, Mayor Broome convened a team of medical leaders from our local hospitals, clinics and urgent cares that work with the Mayor's Healthy City Initiative to discuss the measures our community needed to take to protect our residents and prevent Baton Rouge from becoming a hot-spot.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Mayor Broome has leveraged public-private partnerships to meet the needs of East Baton Rouge Parish residents, and to proactively approach the adversities facing the Capital Region.

In collaboration with local hospitals, the Mayor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness established the first community testing site in Louisiana.

HIV/AIDS

Through our work with the Ryan White Program, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Louisiana Department of Health, we have made significant strides in our effort to end the HIV epidemic.

Under Mayor Broome's leadership, Baton Rouge has a significantly lower ranking for the rate of AIDS diagnoses. Before Mayor Broome was elected, Baton Rouge was ranked #1 in the country for AIDS diagnosis rate. In 2018, Baton Rouge's ranking dropped to #10.

We worked with Ochsner and Our Lady of the Lake to implement opt-out testing in emergency rooms and assessment systems. Ochsner, the largest healthcare system in Louisiana, is now implementing opt-out testing across the state.

HIV testing in East Baton Rouge Parish has increased 101.6% in the past three years. Educating the community in prevention, testing, helping people get the care and wrap around meetings they need.

GEAUX GET HEALTHY

Part of the Mayor's Healthy City Initiative, Geaux Get Healthy is addressing food deserts and food insecurity in Baton Rouge. Through the facilitation of public private partnerships, Geaux Get Healthy works with local nonprofits to lessen the effects of food insecurity in the Capital Region. The Humana Foundation and The Blue Cross Blue Shield have awarded Geaux Get Healthy over \$3 million dollars to improve community health in Baton Rouge to date.

In 2020 GGH expanded it's coalition to include community nutrition programming partners. The American Heart Association provides nutrition education and cooking classes through their cooking with Heart Curriculum. Our Lady of the Lake provides a program in their clinic to address food insecurity.



ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

Geaux Get Healthy seeks to provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables within a 1 mile of home or work to as many residents as possible. In the two years, Geaux Get Healthy expanded its reach to the entire north Baton Rouge community.

The 4 main partners addressing food insecurity in the 70805 zip code are:

- Baton Roots Farm operated by the Wall's Project at BREC's Howell Park.
- Top Box Foods delivers boxes of fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and seafood and supports North Baton Rouge corner stores in selling fresh fruit and vegetables
- Grow Baton Rouge is a mobile farmers market operating in North Baton Rouge.
- Dollar General invested in a North Baton Rouge store location to provide fresh fruits and vegetables starting in 2020.

In just under two years, Geaux Get Healthy has engaged over 4,000 residents with over a quarter of these residents identified as food insecure on the USDA Food Insecurity Survey. Over 80% of engaged residents were identified as low or very low food security. More than 50% of these residents reported trying a new food, almost 80% reported utilizing our partners more than twice and all participants reported an increase of at least one point on the USDA Food Insecurity survey as a result participating in Geaux Get Healthy.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Mayor Broome signed an Executive Order to establish the Mayor's Commission on Racial Equity and Inclusion, which works to instill the practice of racial equity and inclusion throughout the city-parish government and Baton Rouge community.

The COREI agenda focuses on establishing equity in justice in these four focus areas:

- Community and Economic Development
- Education, Health and Human Services
- Arts, Culture & Community Based Nonprofits
- Government Entities

RECAST

The Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) Grant Program is a federal grant program designed to assist high-risk youth and families who live in communities that have experienced trauma due to civil unrest or other community adversities.

In the wake of the great flood of 2016, the shooting of Alton Sterling and the police ambush, the Mayor's ReCAST BR Coalition has provided training and services to promote healing to over 5,000 law enforcement officers, first responders, educators, behavioral health clinicians and citizens throughout City-Parish since 2017. ReCast also connects residents to community assets and organizations that promote healings, training and development for citizens of all ages. The goal for 2021 is to reach 100,000 residents.